CULTURAL INFLUENCES OF THE EAST AND WEST: COSTUME AMONG POPULATION OF BOKA KOTORSKA IN THE 18TH CENTURY

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During the 18th century a variety of elements of the cultures of the East and West blended harmonically into a unique dress mode in the Boka Kotorska bay. This paper confirms the general well known opinion that clothes has an important role in system of communication and stands as an obvious exponent of cultural affairs. I put an accent on women’s clothes, dividing it into urban costume and traditional costume, the latter serving as the best example in pointing out many layers and different cultural influences on clothes, ranging from the ancient Balkans, Slavic to Mediterranean and Oriental. The examples used allowed me to show how the different cultural interests of the East and West were incorporated together in a synthesis, adjusting to every single individual.

Keywords: culture, influences, women’s fashion, assimilation; Boka Kotorska (Montenegro).

The Boka Kotorska Bay is a part of the Mediterranean area, sharing thus the same cultural and historic destiny. Due to its geo-political position and climate the bay has attracted, since the ancient times, numerous populations, nations and rulers who more or less successfully governed this area characterized by scant agricultural land and industry directed towards maritime and trade. Many of the world cultural strata had left their marks permanently on the bay: the centuries-old cultural layers and intertwining of different cultural influences enhanced the particulars in all segments of life.

For more than two decades, I am deeply engaged in cultural, historical and ethnological research of this area, relying mostly on archive sources, literature and fieldwork. The monographs as well as numerous papers on the subject that I have publish so far reveal though only a small part of the rich ethnological and anthropological past which this part of the Mediterranean has to offer.

For centuries, the shores of the Boka Kotorska Bay were under the dissonant influence of political and cultural interests of the two worlds: the East and West, creating so a synthesis of various tendencies and convections, adjusted to the characteristics of this region. There

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are many examples to illustrate this, but this time I have chosen only few which illustrate
dress fashion in the 18th century.

Studying and learning about the socio-political and other relevant factors at work in
the bay in the beginning and during the 18th century, turned out to be the only possible
frame appropriate to accept an image which clearly defines the various, coexisting cultural
influences characterized for this region.1

The Boka Kotorska was an integral geographic location from the end of the 15th
century until the end of the 17th century; the region was divided between the two lords: the area of
and around Herceg Novi and Risan was under the Ottoman rule, while the rest of the Boka
area was ruled by the Venetians since the 15th century. After two centuries of Turkish rule,
in 1687, Venetians managed to conquer the northwest side of the Boka Kotorska, fulfilling
thus the aim to rule about the whole bay. The shift in government had produced primarily
the changes in demography, ethnic and cultural spheres (Popović 1924; Zloković 1971; Sta-
nojević 1983; Radojičić 1994). An influx of large numbers of incomers had changed ethnic,
religious and socio-cultural structure. The newcomers of Italian and Dinaric background,
along with the native populations, have tried equally to harmonize everyday life. Already,
in the first decades of the 18th century, the newcomers of Christian affiliation had switched
from being hajduk (bandits-outlaws), warriors, cattlemen and agriculturists to skillful
traders, seamen and artisans; some decided to populate the cities’ outskirts although many
also had stayed to live in hinterland, engaging in agriculture and stock-farming (Radojičić
1990: 133). The common interest in shared everyday life has found its expression among
different ethnic groups whose members included ship holders, traders, artisans, seamen,
land owners, agriculturists, fishermen, Venetian lower and higher administrative stuff,
soldiers, clergy, and a few lawyers and physicians. All these people along with their families
were the subject of research in terms of dress and segments of material culture, identical to
the more developed regions of the Mediterranean (Radojičić 1994, 1995).

In my book on dress fashion, published in the mid 1990’s, I reconstructed the dress
mode of population from all social layers and confessions in this part of Adriatic, in the
18th century (Radojičić 1995); this has allowed an insight - in particulars as well as in the
whole - into the lifestyle in the given time period. In addition, the book entitled Izmedu
kulturna Istoka i Zapada (In Between Cultures of East and West) (Radojičić 2006), highli-
ghts the examples which clearly point out how a dress represented the cultural influences
coming from both the East and West.

1 Old, yellowish and moldy archive sources from the archive of Political Venetian Archive (1687-1797),
State Archive of Monte Negro Cetinje, Archive Department of Herceg Novi, and Historical Archive
of Kotor, beside the State Archive of Venice, allowed a new insight of the cultural and historic heri-
tage of this part of the Mediterranean. In addition to the literature, these data are the only indicator
within the hopeless lack of data from material culture, providing so an insight into processes during
the 18th century.
In culture and arts during the 17th and 18th centuries, baroque is the dominant style - a pearl of irregular shape. The baroque period is characterized by an external, public manifestation of all the societal aspects - from birth onwards, until death, which was reflected also in dress pieces, compared in the paper. The spirit of this last grand European style had reached the shores of the Boka bay, leaving its marks everywhere. During this period, the feeble Venice had gradually been reduced to a European province.

![Painting](image)


The dress fashion was foremost determined by the conditions in the social system, and it reflected some general economic and political events, the spirit of the time period. Using the clothes as an example, I was able to learn about moral attitudes, esthetic values, prevailing

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2 The baroque period succeeds the Renaissance, bringing irregular elements and emphasizing clearly the passage of life and rule of the Death, aided by the everyday bloody reality in Europe.

3 The discoveries of the new trade routes have placed Venice above the level of the states with absolute monarchies and the Atlantic economic expansion (Spain, England, France), where baroque was especially developed.
norms, fashion, class and religious affiliation, occupations and other characteristics of the people who wore the clothes (Radojičić 1995: 7). Geographic origin of the clothes has enabled to establish all cultural influences reflected in dress, as well as the tendency of the clothes owners to transfer quickly from rural to urban circle (Radojičić 2006: 14, 15). In order to establish the various cultural influences and intertwining, I emphasized women’s clothes, as the most relevant for researching cultural layers, influences and adaptive processes.

In my book Nošnja i barokna odjeća u XVIII vijeku (The costume and baroque dress in the 18th century) (Radojičić 1995) the dress pieces are divided into two categories:
• traditional dress, i.e. dress worn most likely by the domicile population of Christian Orthodox affiliation, who inhabited rural areas, as well as the newcomers who brought their own clothes; also the clothes worn by the remaining Christian population in the cities;
• urban costume, i.e. clothes worn in the urban areas, representing fashionable clothes from Italy and Europe from the relevant period.

Within this division and applied parameters, and based on categories and quality of the used material, quantities of clothes listed the lists of dowries and certain wills, in court documents related to trade and artisans, in a widest sense, it was possible to introspect economic and social position of the clothes carriers, the clothes’ functions, the results of acculturation, contacts between rural and urban culture, hinterland and the Adriatic sea. This confirmed the general opinion that clothes represent an obvious exponent of cultural circumstances.

The traditional dress/costume has served as the best example of showing various and layered cultural influences. The reason is, firstly, that the traditional style of life did not undergo considerable changes neither the clothes therefore. Secondly, the way of life established some esthetic values, and thirdly, it reflected the economic power of the individuals who wore the clothes.

It should be bear in mind that the available archive sources is not living, firsthand ethnographical account, hence some things will always run short in any analysis, such as: what were the exact differences in dress between girls and married women or children. This applies to clothes having characteristic of folk dress.

In archive sources, the most relevant data included lists of prđija, dowry. These lists are mostly in Italian language, made by various notaries of different educational level, written in baroque letters of the 18th century. Some lists were written in ancient Cyrillic, the first one from 1690. The handwritings are difficult to read, with many slang expressions, in addition to the expressions particular to the Venice dialect.

This division came about after I analyzed the available data on the clothes’ owners and research of demography, ethnic and background origin, economic and social status. Based on the names and labels of the clothes worn, connected with the names of owners of a particular style, I was able to make this division.

In the analysis on cultural intertwining, I also used data on artisans: textile artisans, leather tanning, ink-stand workers, furriers, dressers, shoe-makers, while a special place was given to rich goldsmiths who evidently influenced dress mode and social status.
The carriers of the traditional women’s costumes were mostly from the newcomers and native populations of Christian Orthodox affiliation. The economic development brought about fast acceptance and usage of the clothes pieces imported from the West (Radojičić 2006: 139). These clothes’ pieces were accepted due to the enhanced social and economic power of the newcomers, and they vividly illustrate the results brought about by the contact of the two cultures. Certain pieces, or just some elements, especially the embroidery on shirts, kerchiefs and some upper body clothes, point out to long-lasting influences of the ancient Balkans elements, in addition to the clothes which were clearly of an Oriental origin (names, fashion, design), established in some earlier times.

The richer women from this part of the population gradually accepted fashion news and fashion in general which came from the Mediterranean towns. These women were dressed in luxury clothes, worn also in other Adriatic coastal towns. The models did not lag behind from the clothes worn by townspeople in the Mediterranean and in Europe.

The traditional costume was made of basic and alternative clothes’ pieces. The basic pieces were: a shirt, raha, kotula (skirt), apron, belt, kerchief and socks, while the alternative one included: camisole, coret, scarf, zubun, curdija, kaftan. Very rarely, only in individual cases, the lists of dowries (as a main data source) contained pieces such as: mintan, anterija, aladza, benluk, bran, jecerma, kapama, mrhcina (a long dress). The most usual type of shoes was apanci (a type of peasant shoes), slippers, pashamage and sometimes regular shoes (Radojičić 1995: 9, 2006: 139–213). I have described 17 pieces of clothing and 7 types of head decoration.

Cotula - a skirt, and camisiol - a type of vest, are the two pieces that were, based on my own analysis, brought about by the fast process of acculturation in between rural-urban areas, a subculture of a global culture. Polachetta and milordi were short, luxury coats, worn in the Mediterranean towns; they are described along with the women’s urban costume, as the examples of adopted clothes used by the richer stratum of the local population. Also, for example, mrchina, a type of long dress with sleeves, named after a black material dating from the Middle Ages, was used until the first decades of the 20th century. Aladza, an upper body part piece of clothing, is oriental, but haven’t had a wider usage, and the same is true for kaftan, benluk and mintan.

The traditional costume in this area contained various elements from different cultures that had met in this region: the Balkans, Slavic, Oriental and Mediterranean.8

Women’s urban dress assumed a type of clothing widely used and known in the developed urban areas of the Mediterranean in the 18th century; it represented fashionable clothes from Italy and reflected influences from the West, imported from bigger European centers. The main carriers of the European fashion in clothes were newcomers of Italian origin,

8 All these examples could be seen on www.ei-sanu.co.rs.
who continued to follow the fashion of their respective birth place. Mostly, it was a type of fashion of the appropriate social classes in Venice, under the heavy influence of French fashion, and fashion novelties from England, Poland, Russia as well as costumes from the Orient. In addition to haute couture, so-called “small clothes” or prêt-a-porter was very popular due to its comfortable design and practicality, during the whole 18th century. In France, the clothes included *casaquins*, *caraca*, *pierrot*, *juste* and other types, mostly two pieces of costumes. In the same period, a wave of French fashion extended to Italy too. The carriers of the new fashion trends belonged to aristocracy and richer urban class, mainly from the bigger cities such as Florence, Naples, Genoa and Venice. For the most part, the inheritance of the past stayed rooted among the middle class; nevertheless, the also accepted,

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*During the 18th century, Europe has witnessed the rule of the French fashion and design, as one of the brightest periods in the development of fashion costume. In opposition were fashion and modes from England, which aimed for practicality and good design. During this period, European fashion places imitated fashion from eastern countries - Poland and Russia, as well as costumes from the Orient. The Polish fashion is most obviously seen in piece *polachi - polachetti*, present frequently since the wedding of Marie Leszczyńska and Louis XV, from 1725. The influence of Russian fashion was connected with French-Russian relationships, while the Turkish costume, ever since the 15th century, was a constant inspiration of haute couture designers.*
in time and with numerous local version, some changes. From the French fashion trends of the 18th century, vivid, lively colors got accepted: red, blue, yellow and their combinations. In the mid century, these vivid colors gave up to somehow tawny colors.10

Fashionable trends popular in the 18th century Europe were also reflected in women’s urban dress in the Boka Kotorska bay. The 18th century witnessed an expansion of magazines dedicated to fashion and design solely, hence fashionable clothes were made by the tailors in Boka too (Radojičić 2006: 306–326, 1995: 19). I’ve established the usage of 20 upper body clothes pieces, mostly of the Mediterranean cultural heritage; for andrienne - a lighsome dress of the French origin, in between 1705-1715, called volantes (outside of France called andrienne), I discovered it was worn in the Boka Kotorska bay early in the 18th century. Shirt, skirt, aprone, skarf and socks were clothes represented in both type of the costumes, and the differences among the two were related to design and material type but not in all the examples.

The richness and beauty of the material used for clothes, numerous decorations in the form of gold embroidery, silver and gold buttons, silk ribbons and lace insertion, made that the urban women’s dress in the Boka bay did not lag behind to fashionable clothes worn in European towns. The costume united the basic characteristics of the dominant fashion represented in baroque.

In the beginning of this paper, I stated that I will present only a few notable examples of the clothing worn which show the cultural mixing and intertwining of the East and West; my work has shown this clearly, especially so perhaps the research on textile used in the 18th century in the northwest of the Boka Kotorska bay (Radojičić 1993: 180–183, 1995: 50–52).

The archive sources already mentioned also contain lists of textiles/materials used in making bed sheets, towels, kitchen and table cloth, napery, napkins etc. The most usable data on the subject are noted down in dowry lists.11 Sporadically, I was able to find the data on textile used in other archive sources as well, such as wills, good people arbitrations etc. (Radojičić 1993: 178). The ways these textiles were noted down allowed me to assume their function: cheap textile - for everyday use, working clothes, more expensive textile - for usage in tailoring dressy, holiday clothes. Based on these data, I have reconstructed the rich textile offer on the northwest of the Boka Kotorska bay, though it can be concluded that the same were worn and in usage in the whole area. I found out that during the 18th century, around 64 different types of textiles were used, out of which I have described 54, and divided into four categories: 13 out of silk, 23 out of cotton, 10 out of wool, and mixed 8. I provided their labels, description and origin: the local origin was represented with 8

10 In the Marie-Antoinette time vivid colors were very popular. In Italy, light materials in vivid colors were widely used in accordance with the Mediterranean taste, while the aristocracy in Florence and Genoa, as well as nobles in Venice, worn costumes in the dominant black color.

11 These items are often connected with descriptions of clothes (“камижола од камбелота“ kamizola od kambelota) or were listed as weft materials. So, an individual named Despa Curcic had “25 lakata [ancient linear measure] testemeluka [material]“ and 23 lakata of raw silk.
types of textiles, 9 were from the east, and 37 from the West. Eleven materials are without detailed analysis. In addition to the products made by the local spinners and weavers, a characteristic of the rural area, the data point out that the import of done clothing and materials came mostly from Italy, then Holland, France and the Orient. The types of the textiles used also point out to social and economic status of their owners/users, which is particularly useful when there are no other data on the people who wore the clothes. Lists of the material labels, and also the places of their origin, is an important indicator of how much the local and foreign cultures participated in the structure of the ruling culture in the northwest Boka in the 18th century.

The local textile production must have had a long tradition. Women used to loom and weave at their homes and there were also professional spinners. The locally produced materials, used for traditional costume pieces were made of wool, linen and hemp. Wool was used most often for various materials by weaving, to be used in all upper body clothes pieces. It was also used to make socks, aprons, materials and bags. Since the Middle Ages, locally known and used for the traditional costume were these types of wool: *rasha*, *mrcchina* and *modrina*.

Wool was imported in great quantities during the whole 18th century. Venetian government strictly controlled all of the export-import business, so also the ones related to prohibition of wool import (Arhiv 248, 87).

Linen and hemp were used to weave skirts, scarves etc. Silk was also very important.

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13 *Rasha* was a name for a material of white and dark blue color. These labels were identified also with a pieces of clothing, so for example, *mrcchina* also means a dress made out of black wool.
and widely used material, but there is not enough data. Namely, Venice had very good developed production of textiles, hence during the Venetian ruling of Boka, the silk making (sericulture) was developed also, and numerous silk materials were used for clothing (Crnić Pejović 2003).

The shops in the Boka’s towns were stored well with a variety of materials from the East and West but mostly from Italy (Arhiv 50, 6).

Richer women in this area, regardless of their respective ethnic or religious affiliation owned numerous pieces of jewelry. The jewelry classification and detailed description has enabled me to acquire many data which serve as examples of cultural influences by the local medieval jewelry schools and fashion trends imported from Europe. The fact is that many local jewelers worked in Boka Kotorska during the 18th century, continuing so a tradition of medieval jewelry tradition and art. 63 names of the jewelers of the time have remained, 38 from Kotor and 25 from Hergec Novi.14

Social and cultural processes had happened at great speed during the 19th century in this part of the Mediterranean. In addition to the already stated above, I emphasize that maritime was the main and most important industry and most of the population supported themselves by being involved in this industry. This fact contributes to our understanding of real influences of foreign cultures in this area. Seamen always used to bring a piece of clothing from their sea journeys. The intensive land and sea trade also aided the influence of other cultures. Fashion and clothing were primarily determined by the conditions in the social system, hence the clothes reflect general social, economic and political affairs, representing so a spirit of the time.

Clothing represents one of the segments of the ruling culture and allows an insight into lifestyle of a given time, with all the variables, constants and cultural borrowings and

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14 Jewelry also has an important place in deciphering origin, way of production and processes of acculturation. More data on the subject are in: Petrović 1984; Radojičić 1995a, 2006: 213–231.
changes. A variety of cultural elements of the East and West blend nicely together in a unique fashion image, and it is also confirmed the general opinion that clothes has a significant place in a system of message sending and that it is an obvious exponent of cultural affairs. Cultural interests and influences of the two worlds, the East and West, have left their marks, creating a synthesis of different elements which managed to be adjusted and modulated to every individual.

In the past, the material culture of Boka Kotorska had its own specific characteristics. Fast and easy acceptance of diversity without conflict and arguments, identification of one’s own identity with the identity of the area lived (Boka equals being a Bokelj, a member of the population living in the bay), and accepting others religious, cultural and citizen freedoms, are some features which make this region so specific. The in-capacious geography of this area made a contrast to its cultural wideness.

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1995b Nakit u hercegnojškom kraju u 18. veku. Glasnik Odeljenja društvenih nauka 9 [Podgorica: Crnogorska akademija nauka i umjetnosti], 165–172;


KULTURNI VPLIVI VZHODA IN ZAHODA NA PRIMERU OBLAČENJA PREBIVALCEV BOKE KOTORŠE V 18. STOLETJU

Obrežje Zaliva Boke Kotorške je bilo v stoletjih stižišče močnih in nasprotujočih si političnih in kulturnih interesov dveh svetov – Vzhoda in Zahoda. Tako je nastala sinteza različnih smeri in tokov, usklajena in prilagojena vsem posebnostim tega podnebja. Primeri, na katerih je to razvidno, tu so izbrani samo nekateri, ki so povezani z oblačilno kulturo v 18. stoletju.

Sestava prebivalstva tega dela jadranskega obrežja v 18. stoletju, njegov ozemeljski in etnični izviri kakor tudi številni podatki o zgodovinskem, ekonomskem, družbenem in socialnem razvoju, omogočajo, da podatke natančno rekonstruiramo in da se na zglede oblačil in njihovih lastnikov prepričamo o vseh večkulturnih posebnostih Boke Kotorške.

Skupni interes za sožitje so tod naše različne etnične skupine, katerih pripadniki so bili lastniki ladij, trgovi, obrtniki, pomornik, lastniki zemlje, poljedelci, ribiči, izključno beneško nižje in višje upravno osebje, vojniki, mučevniki, kak združnik in advokat; vsi ti in njihove družine so bili lastniki oblačilnih kosov, ki so bili predmet avtoričine raziskave.

Družbeni, socialni in kulturni procesi so bili v 18. stoletju zelo hitri. Oblačenje so predvsem določale razmere v družbenem sistemu, tako da v oblačilni kulturi izraža splošno družbeno, ekonomsko in politično dogajanje, v njej se zrcali duh časa.

Prek oblek je bilo mogoče spoznati moralna stališča, estetsko vrednotenje, prevladujoče norme, narodno, razredno in versko pripadnost. Omogočila so rekonstrukcijo podobe o družbenem položaju, starosti, zakonskem stanu, spolu, poklicu in drugih značilnostih okolja.

Novo naseljeni prebivalci iz dinarskega zaledja so prinesli s sabo način življenja in dojemanja, bila značilna za kraje, od koder so prišli. So se pa že v prvih desetletjih 18. stoletja začeli prilagajati novim oblikam življenja in hitro spremenili dotedanje navade, s tem pa tudi obleko. V oblačilju prebivalstva so bili opazni vplivi evropskega oblačenja in sloga – pri mestnem prebivalstvu, podezorenih baro- in rahovskih in turško-vzhodnih elementov pa pri ruralnem.

Opazni so postali akulturacijski procesi, stiki med kmečko in mestno kulturo, med celinskim zaledjem in jadranskim obrežjem. Nosilke tradicionalne ženske noše so bile iz vrst novih prisevljencev. Nošo so prinesle iz domačih krajev, nekatere sestavine pa so nosili tudi že prej staroselci pravoslavne vere. Nosilke tega načina oblačenja, posebno tiste iz novonastale mestne plast, so z ekonomskim razvojem vse hitreje sprejemale oblačilne sestavine, uvožene z Zahoda.

Ženska mestna noša označuje način oblačenja, poznan v razvitejšem mestnem okolju v Sredozemlju 18. stoletja; to so bila modna oblačila iz Italije in pa zahodni vplivi iz večjih evropskih središč. Glavni nosilci evropskega načina oblačenja so bili priseljeni Italijani. Sledili so modi, ki so jo prinesli iz svojih mest, najpogosteje na primer modnih družbenih plasti v Benetkah, ki
so bile pod vse močnejšim vplivom francoske mode, pa tudi modnih tokov iz Anglije, Poljske, Rusije in Orienta.
Po bogastvu in lepoti materiala, po bogatih zlatih vezinah, srebrnih in zlatih gumih, številnih svilenih trakcih, čipkah itn. mestna oblačila niso zaostajala za tistimi v evropskih mestih. Vsebovala so glavne značilnosti baročne mode.

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